



GED® Program

Educator Handbook

Everything you need to prepare students for the GED® test

- ☒ In-depth look at GED® test content
- ☒ Recommended teaching strategies
- ☒ How to know if your students are ready

Edition 4.1



Chapter 1: The GED® Test – A Closer Look

The GED® test was built from the ground up to give students a test that measures the skills they need to succeed. The test focuses on the foundational knowledge and skills needed for career- and college-readiness, so colleges and employers know that students who pass the GED® test have the skills to excel on the job or in the classroom.

Keep reading to learn more about the GED® test, including:

- GED® test basics
- GED® test benefits
- What's on the Reasoning Through Language Arts test
- What's on the Mathematical Reasoning test
- What's on the Science test
- What's on the Social Studies test

GED® test basics

- 4 test subjects: Reasoning Through Language Arts (RLA), Mathematical Reasoning, Science, and Social Studies
- Students must score 145 in all 4 test subjects to earn their GED® credential
- Students don't have to take all 4 tests at once
- Delivered on computer
- Available in both English and Spanish
- Just over 7 hours for all 4 test subjects
- 1 essay and up to 2 short answer questions (known as “constructed response” items)
- Offers three passing levels:
 - GED® Passing Score (score of 145-164)
 - GED® College Ready (score of 165-174)
 - GED® College Ready + Credit (score of 175-200)
- Passing levels are based on the performance of high school graduates from the class of 2013 who took the test as part of the standardization and norming study
- Scores reported in the Enhanced Score Report, available in student's MyGED® account

GED® test benefits

- Pay-as-you-go option lets students pay for the test subject they want, when they want to take it
- All students get \$20 off 2 retakes per subject with the discounted retake program
- Same-day scoring
- Free accommodations available including extra time and a paper test option
- 100% refund when test canceled or re-scheduled at least 24 hours before appointment

What's on the Reasoning Through Language Arts (RLA) test

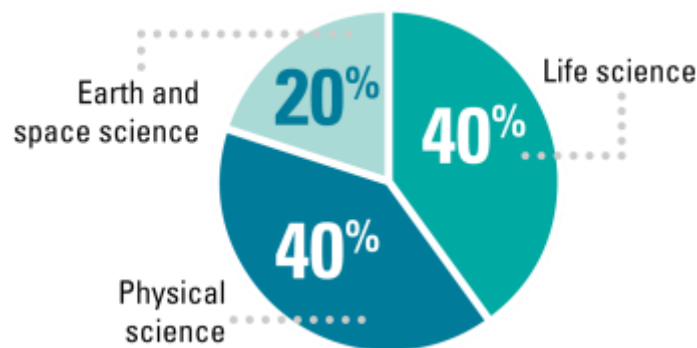
- 150 minutes (including a 10-minute break)
- Includes multiple choice, short answer, drop-down, and a variety of technology-enhanced items
- Includes one 45-minute extended response (essay)
- Featured text on test is 75% informational, 25% literary
- Text ranges in complexity, including texts at the career- and college-readiness level
- Text ranges from 400 to 900 words long
- Text vocabulary focuses on words that appear frequently in a wide variety of disciplines
- Measures the student's:
 - Ability to read closely, write clearly, and edit and understand written English
 - Ability to understand, interpret, and answer questions based on text
 - Ability to use evidence to support an argument
 - Understanding of basic English skills at a level needed to succeed in college or a job

What's on the Mathematical Reasoning test

- 115 minutes
- 2 parts
 - No calculator allowed on the first section
 - May use a TI-30XS calculator for the remaining questions
- Includes multiple choice, drop-down, and a variety of technology-enhanced items
- Calculator guide is provided
- Math formulas are provided
- Measures the student's:
 - Quantitative problem-solving abilities (45%)
 - Algebraic problem-solving abilities (55%)

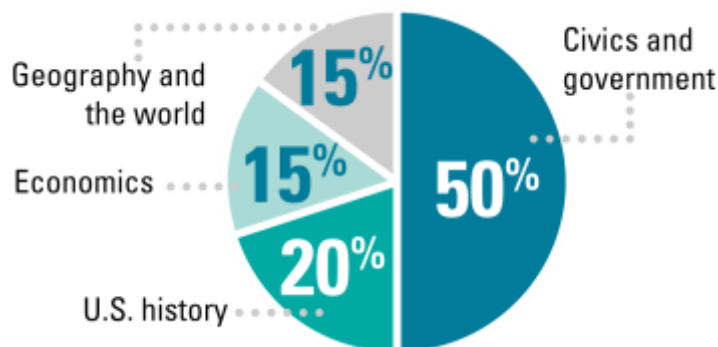
What's on the Science test

- 90 minutes
- Includes multiple choice, drop down, and a variety of technology-enhanced items
- May include up to 2 short answer questions that should take about 10 minutes each to write
- No break
- May use a TI-30XS calculator
- Measures the student's scientific reasoning skills in three areas:
 - Reading and writing in science (30%),
 - Science concepts (40%), and
 - Mathematical reasoning in science (30%)
- These skills are applied to real world situations in the three science **content** topics:



What's on the Social Studies test

- 70 minutes
- Includes multiple choice, drop-down, and a variety of technology-enhanced items
- No break
- Can use a TI-30XS calculator
- Measures the student's reasoning skills in three areas:
 - Reading and writing in Social Studies (33%),
 - Social Studies concepts (33%), and
 - Mathematical reasoning in Social Studies (33%)
- These skills are applied to real world situations in the four **content** topics:



Chapter 2: What Scores Look Like

Students who take the GED® test or the official GED Ready® practice test will get their test scores in their MyGED® accounts at GED.com. All students receive an Enhanced Score Report under the “My Scores” section that includes 4 parts:

- My Score
- How I Can Score Higher (Personal Study Plan)
- What My Score Means
- My Written Answers

Read below for more information on the score scale and personal study plan.

My Scores

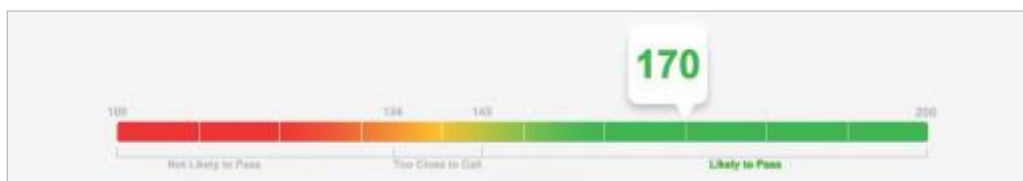
The My Scores section is where students find the scores they received on their GED® test or GED Ready® practice test. The section looks slightly different depending on whether the score is for the GED® test or the GED Ready® practice test. That’s because the tests have different score levels.

GED® Test Scores



- **Below Passing** (score of 100 – 144)
Students who earn a below passing score did not demonstrate the skills graduating high school seniors need to earn their high school diploma
- **GED® Passing Score** (score of 145-164)
Students who earned the GED® Passing Score demonstrated the skills that graduating high school seniors need to earn their diploma
- **GED® College Ready** (score of 165-174)
Students who earned the GED® College Ready score demonstrated the skills that graduating high school seniors need to earn their diploma at a level indicating career- and college-readiness
- **GED® College Ready + Credit** (score of 175-200)
The highest score possible on the GED® test. Students who earned the GED® College Ready + Credit score not only demonstrated the skills that graduating high school seniors need to earn their diploma at a level indicating career- and college-readiness, but they may be eligible for up to 10 college credit hours to apply to their program of study (3 credits for math, 3 credits for science, 3 credits for social studies, 1 credit for language arts).

GED Ready® Practice Test Scores



Score	Score Range	What it means
Not Likely to Pass	100–133	Students who score Not Likely to Pass need to study more.
Too Close to Call	134–144	Students who score Too Close to Call may be able to pass the GED® test, but may want to study more before testing to be sure.
Likely to Pass	145–200	Students who score Likely to Pass are ready to take the GED® test.

How I Can Score Higher (Personal Study Plan)

Students who didn't pass or who want to try for a higher score should use the personal study plan in the score report. The recommendations are based on their unique performance on each GED® test or GED Ready® practice test.

- See what skills they need to work on to score higher
- Select their favorite study materials to get a personal study plan with pages and chapters to review

What My Score Means

The What My Score Means section describes all the skills that the student successfully demonstrated on the test. These are student strengths to be built on in future learning and describe what the student knows and can do based on their GED® test results.

My Written Answers

The My Written Answers section displays different information on students' responses depending on whether the score report is for the GED® test or GED Ready® practice test.

- **GED® test** - Shows students' written response score for the Reasoning Through Language Arts extended response
- **GED Ready® practice test** - Shows the written responses students submitted for the Reasoning Through Language Arts extended response and Science short answers. You can use the tools listed in Chapter 3's *Give students feedback on their GED Ready® practice test constructed response* section to guide your students.

Chapter 3: Strategies for Teaching the Test

Your students rely on you to teach them the skills and knowledge they need to pass the GED® test. Here are some teaching strategies to help your students develop those skills as they prepare for the GED® test:

- Use Performance Level Descriptors
- Focus on the skills that may have the biggest impact on your students' preparation
- Prepare your students with test-day tools
- Help students write high-scoring extended responses
- Share the basic rules for writing an extended response
- Give students feedback on their GED Ready® constructed responses
- Help organize math problems
- Watch GED Testing Service webinars for more strategies

Use Performance Level Descriptors

The Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) explain the skills students must demonstrate to score in each of the 3 possible performance levels on the GED® test and the GED Ready® practice test. Here are helpful tips for using the PLDs in your classroom to prepare your students for the test:



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Tip 1: Use PLDs to assess your student's current skill level

- Identify where to focus in order to develop the skills needed to move to the next performance level

Tip 2: Use PLDs to determine when your students are ready to test

- Determine if a student should take the GED Ready® practice test or the GED® test
- Use with the Enhanced Score Report's personal study plan to develop student skills

Tip 3: Use PLDs to shape learning activities

- Set learning objectives in your classroom based on the PLDs
- Determine if you need to adjust how you're approaching the content
- Work one-on-one with students to help develop needed skills

Tip 4: Use PLDs to add perspective to lesson plans

- Determine your students' levels of preparedness and create lesson plans accordingly
- Identify the gaps in your students' skills and develop focused lesson plans to address those gaps

Focus on the skills that have the biggest impact on your students' preparation

Make the most of instructional time with your students by focusing on the skills that will have the biggest impact on their GED® test success.

*While all the indicators listed in the GED® Assessment Target indicators are essential for test-taker success, it may be useful for educators to highlight the skills from the **High Impact Indicators** in their instruction.*

Be sure to also look at the **Relationships Between the High Impact Indicators and Other Indicators**. This tool shows the relationships between the High Impact Indicators and other indicators covered on the GED® test. Use this resource to maximize the effectiveness of your teaching lessons by covering skill sets for multiple test subjects at the same time!



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Prepare your students with test-day tools

It's just as important for students to know how to use the tools available to them during the test. Use these tools in your classrooms so they are prepared on test day.

Five Tools To Make Sure Students See Before Test Day

- The **Computer-Based Testing Tutorial** is a hands-on tutorial that shows students what the computer-based test will look like and walks them through the test's functionality and features. Every student should complete the tutorial before taking the GED® test in order to know how to use the test interface and know what to expect on test day.
- **Extended Response Answer Guidelines** include recommendations for students when crafting their RLA extended response and the criteria that are used in scoring the response.
- **Calculator Reference Sheet** features instructions for using the on-screen TI-30XS calculator allowed on the Mathematical Reasoning, Social Studies, and Science tests
- **Math Formula Sheet and Explanations** offers a list of formulas students can reference when taking the test
- **Sample Erasable Note Boards** are available so students can practice with these tools for test day. Order some for your classroom through GED® PrintHub for the cost of shipping and handling at GEDtestingservice.com/orderfreematerials.

Help students write high-scoring RLA extended responses

During the scoring process, some items are weighted more heavily than others. The extended response item makes up about 20% of the student's score. We recommend that all students answer this item. There are no score deductions for incorrect answers. Make sure your students are prepared to craft fully developed responses. Use the five **Sample Extended Response Passages and Prompts for Classroom Practice** to gauge your students' writing skills and give them feedback for improvement.



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Below is one suggested approach for drafting a fully developed extended response. Use the **Steps for Drafting an Extended Response** to guide your students through each stage of this process. See the *“Create a Thesis Statement” worksheet on the next page* and **Tools for Drafting an Extended Response worksheet** on the Educator Handbook website.

Steps for Drafting an Extended Response

1. Read the passage and question
2. Unpack the prompt (identify key words)
3. Rewrite the question and turn the question into a thesis statement
4. Collect relevant details from passage
5. Organize details into a logical order. Use a graphic organizer if that helps.
6. Draft an answer
7. Re-read and edit/revise the answer making sure all parts of the question are answered

Share the basic rules for writing the RLA extended response

Simply attempting a written response on the RLA test subject doesn’t mean a student will earn points. Responses must meet the minimum scoring criteria - which you can find in the **RLA Extended Response Educator Guides**. Also, make sure your students follow these basic but important rules so they’ll maximize the points they earn on their responses:



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1. **Write a complete essay.** Students should aim to write at least 4-7 paragraphs, or 300-500 words per extended response.
2. **Give commentary on quotes from source texts.** Students need to explain why the evidence they’re quoting supports their argument. Quotes should be used sparingly; most of their response should be their own words.
3. **Develop 2-3 main ideas.** Students should focus on a few main points that they fully-develop with evidence and support.
4. **Proofread.** Students should spend the last 4-5 minutes proofreading their response, especially checking for these grammar issues:
 - Ensure varied sentence structure
 - Correct use of transitions
 - Eliminate wordiness or awkwardness
 - Eliminate run on sentences, sentence fragments
 - Ensure correct homophone usage (e.g., your vs. you’re)
 - Ensure correct subject-verb agreement
 - Proper capitalization
 - Proper use of apostrophes
 - Correct punctuation
 - Ensure proper word order

Create a Thesis Statement

A thesis is an answer to a specific question. A thesis statement makes a claim or proposition that reflects a specific point of view. The thesis statement should recognize both sides of a question, yet focus on two to three specific points (discussion points) sometimes called points of analyses. A thesis statement is the roadmap for the written response. The placement of the thesis statement is generally located in the introduction and summarized in the conclusion of a writing sample.

Sample Thesis Frames

The general argument made by _____ in his/her work _____ is that _____.

Although _____ (believes, demonstrates, argues) that _____, _____ supports/provides the clearest evidence _____.

A key factor in both _____ can be attributed to _____.

When comparing the two positions in this article, _____ provides the clearest evidence that _____.

Looking at the arguments regarding _____, it is clear that _____.

In discussion of _____, one controversial issue has been _____ believes that _____. On the other hand, _____ asserts that _____ is clearly the best supported argument on the issue of _____.

Check the Educator Handbook website for more constructed response tools to print and use in your classroom:

- Sample Lesson Plan & Instructional Plan
- Tools for Drafting a Constructed Response
- Websites and Resources
- Extended Response Answer Guidelines
- Sample Extended Response Passages and Prompts for Classroom Practice - RLA



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Give students feedback on their GED Ready® practice test constructed responses

The constructed response items on the GED Ready® practice test for RLA (extended response) and Science (short answer) are just like the items that are on the GED® test. **Since the GED Ready® practice test doesn't score the constructed responses, your students are counting on you for feedback.**

To give your students feedback on their constructed responses:

1. Have students take the GED Ready® practice test
2. Once they've finished, ask them to print out their score report. This will include their written responses.

Use these constructed response tools to help you score students' responses:

- **Source Text and Prompts** show the question students responded to and the text or data they based their response on
- **Constructed Response Educator Guides** give sample responses for GED Ready® practice test questions at each possible score level. They also explain why each response received the score it did, so you can understand what to look for in each response. One guide is available for the Science test, while two guides (with sample responses from two different extended response prompts) are available for the RLA test.
- **Constructed Response Scoring Tools** are hands-on tools to use when scoring constructed responses. They break down the constructed response into the dimensions and subdimensions that are being evaluated and explain how to award points.

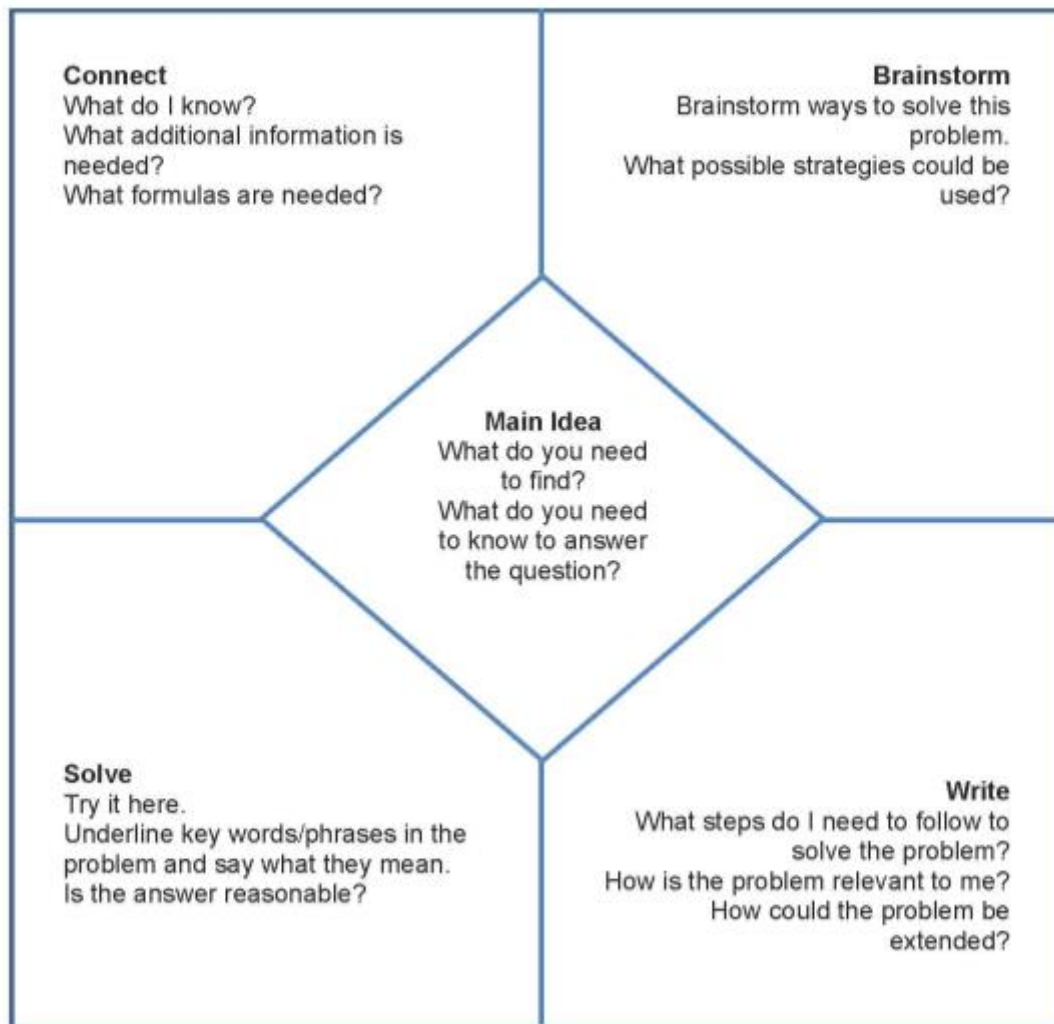
Help organize math problems

Help students translate mathematical questions into steps that help them solve the problem using the **Math Graphic Organizer**. Use this organizer in the classroom to show students how to break down the problem and organize available information.



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Problem: _____



Adapted from Zolman (2009)

Check the Educator Handbook website for more math tools to print and use in your classroom:

- Math Graphic Organizer
- Math Formula Sheet & Explanation
- Calculator Reference Sheet
- More Math Tools: Websites and Resources
- Math Word Problem Translation Guide



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Watch GED Testing Service webinars for more strategies

You'll find more helpful information to use in the classroom in our Tuesdays for Teachers webinars. Watch the webinar archive and keep an eye out for new webinars, added monthly.

Webinars will include:



Find on website

- Teaching strategies to help shape your instruction
- Ideas for classroom projects
- Handouts and worksheets to share with students
- The latest news and updates about the GED® test

Webinars are free and available on-demand.

Chapter 4: See if your students are ready

The best way to find out if your students are ready for the real test is to give them the GED Ready® official practice test. The GED Ready® is the only practice test that tells if a student is likely to pass the GED® test.

Keep reading to learn more about:

- How the GED Ready® practice test predicts GED® test performance
- What GED Ready® scores mean
- How to use the personal study plan
- What to do if a student doesn't pass

How the GED Ready® predicts test performance

Unlike practice tests in the past, the GED Ready® was designed to predict whether a student will pass the operational GED® test. It went through the same standardization and norming process as the operational test, so students who receive a “Likely to Pass” score should be considered prepared and encouraged to take the operational test.

GED Ready® practice test questions are at the same level of difficulty as questions on the operational test, so it really does predict success on the operational GED® test!

"We've found that our students' GED Ready® results are within a point or two of the score they receive on the actual test. It's a really good predictability tool and we're confident that when a student takes GED Ready®, they'll earn a similar score on the real GED® test."

- Raymond Haddix, Simpson County Adult Education, Franklin, KY

Note: Even though the GED Ready® doesn't score constructed responses, it can still tell if a student is ready to test! *Each GED Ready® practice test score considers how a student would typically score on a constructed response based on how they did on the rest of the test.*

What GED Ready® practice test scores mean

Once students take the GED Ready®, they'll receive their Enhanced Score Report on MyGED® at GED.com. Score reports show their test score, the skills they need to work on, what they did well on, and their constructed response, if applicable.

Scores fall into one of three categories: Likely to Pass, Too Close to Call, and Not Likely to Pass.

- **Likely to Pass (145-200)** — If your students score Likely to Pass, they should take that GED® subject test as soon as possible. Score predictions are valid for 60 days; make sure they test while the prediction is still valid.
- **Too Close to Call (134-144)** — If your students score Too Close to Call, use the Enhanced Score Report to see what skills they need to work on before they take the operational test. Depending on their score, they may want to take the GED Ready® practice test again before taking the GED® test.
- **Not Likely to Pass (100-133)** — If your students score Not Likely to Pass, use the Enhanced Score Report to see what skills they need to work on before they take the operational test. Have students take the GED Ready® again to make sure they're ready.

How to use the personal study plan

Students also get a personal study plan in their Enhanced Score Report after they take the GED Ready®. As an educator, you can use this plan to identify the skills and pages to work on in class.

To make the most of the Enhanced Score Report's study plan in your classroom:

1. Have students log into their MyGED® account and view their score report
2. Ask students to select the study materials used in class from the drop-down menu to get the recommendations specific to your classroom materials
3. Ask students to print their report with the recommendations and personal study plan

Start reviewing the recommended materials in your class. It's that simple!

What to do if a student doesn't pass

With the GED® program, students who don't pass the GED® test have more tools than ever to help them succeed on their next try! When students need to retake a GED® test subject:

1. Use the Enhanced Score Report's study plan to help focus their studying on the area they need to improve
2. Give students the GED Ready® practice test before they try taking the test again
3. Once they're ready, have students schedule their retake in MyGED®

With GED Testing Service's Discounted Retake Policy, for every test subject a student pays for but doesn't pass, he'll get 2 discounted retakes in that test subject. For each discounted retake, GED Testing Service waives its costs, so all students are responsible for paying any state or testing center fees (a discount of \$20 per test subject).

Additional Resources

Visit GEDtestingservice.com/educatorhandbook to access the tools and resources referenced in this handbook. This site will also include additional tools that you will find helpful for your classroom instruction.



Find on website

Subscribe to the GED Testing Service e-newsletter to get the latest news, tools, and tips on teaching the GED® test. Go to GEDtestingservice.com/subscribe to sign up.

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